



## **Virginia Department of Fire Programs**

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# **MEDIA ALERT**

**For Immediate Release**

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### **Virginia Department of Fire Programs Receives College Credit Recommendations for Training**

Virginia Department of Fire Programs joins a select number of organizations that have added value to their training courses through college credit recommendations as a result of a review conducted on November 30 and December 1, 2005 by the American Council on Education's (ACE) College Credit Recommendation Service.

A team of content specialists, selected from college faculty, has reported that the Virginia Department of Fire Programs courses are comparable to college level courses and may be used as transfer credit at many colleges and universities. Twenty courses were evaluated and recommended for 52 semester hours college credit. In addition, Virginia Department of Fire Programs has been authorized to use one semester hour college credit for each of the Hand-Off Programs of National Fire Academy (NFA) courses they teach. Hand-Off programs are courses developed by NFA, piloted by NFA for one to two years, and then "handed-off" to the states.

According to Jo Ann Robinson, Director, ACE's College Credit Recommendation Service, in over thirty years, ACE has helped thousands of employees earn a college education and has saved employers millions of dollars in tuition reimbursement. She adds, "the continued interest to add value to workplace courses through a third-party review comes as no surprise, especially with the knowledge that superior training increases productivity, with the need to retain good employees as the population ages, and with business and industry concerned about their place in the global market, more and more organizations are turning to the ACE College Credit Recommendation Service to assure the quality of that training.

"We were excited to have ACE review our curricula to determine whether the training courses we offer qualify for college credit recommendation," said Aubrey W. "Buddy" Hyde, Jr., Executive Director of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. "Now that the review has been completed, we couldn't be more thrilled with the outcome. Having 20 of our courses recommended for college credit shows the progress our agency has made to improve higher education for fire and emergency personnel."

"We believe strongly in higher education within the fire and emergency services community. This is great news not only for individuals already working in these disciplines, but also for those who are considering a career in fire and emergency services," added Hyde.

Colleges and universities have also been well served by ACE, because qualified adults from the workforce are continuing or completing their college education in record numbers. According to a recent U.S. Department of Education Study, more than 40 percent of American adults take part in some type of adult learning activity each year—the vast majority for work-related reasons or because they want to earn an academic credential.

Virginia Western Community College has a number of currently employed firefighters working on certificate and associate's degrees, according to Elizabeth Wilmer, Dean of Humanities. "Granting college credit for ACE accredited VDFP courses is a win-win situation for these students. They received quality training while making progress toward their degree goals," Wilmer elaborated.

In addition to the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, Delta Air Lines, Fidelity Investments, FAA, Fire Department of New York City, Leadership Development Center of the Department of Homeland Security, Learning Tree International, McDonalds Corporation, National Fire Academy, Southern California Water Company, Union Pacific Railroad, and Walt Disney World Resort among many others offer ACE college credit-recommended apprenticeship programs or courses.

For further information on how you can add value to your quality courses, contact Jo Ann Robinson, Director of ACE College Credit Recommendation Service, the Center for Lifelong Learning, American Council on Education, One Dupont Circle, Suite 250, Washington, DC 20036-1193, (202) 939-9431.

### **Fire Services Organizations with ACE College Credit Recommendations**

- Bergen County Law and Public Safety Institute Police, Fire, and EMS Academies
- Fire and Rescue Training Institute, University of Missouri
- Fire Department of New York City
- Georgia Fire Academy\*
- Illinois Fire Service Institute
- International Association of Fire Fighters
- Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute, University of Maryland
- National Fire Academy
- New York Academy of Fire Sciences\*`
- Tennessee Fire Service and Codes Enforcement Academy
- Texas Engineering Extension Service
- Virginia Department of Fire Programs
- West Virginia University Fire Service Extension

\*Agencies currently having Instructional Site Reviews.

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